

WORK LIFE BALANCE IN CURRENT TIMES ACROSS SECTORS

Corresponding Author: **Manasvi Mewada**

Co-author: **Dr. Shiny Colaco**

Mail Id: manasvimewada718@gmail.com,
shiny.colaco@thakureducation.org

Abstract

With great success comes great responsibility, but great responsibility results in even greater compromise on work life balance. In today's fast paced world, where things move in fast track speed, the importance of work life balance is often looked down. Work life balance is extremely crucial for both, business practice as well as personal lives.

It is a central issue affecting wellbeing, as family and work are the most important elements of everyone's life. Any competing demand of both can cause conflict and negatively affect wellbeing of a person.

These days jobs look extremely lucrative from the compensation and benefits point of view, but the quality of the work life gets deteriorated eventually. This has a toll on mental health, emotional health and ultimately physical health. Work life satisfaction is a major factor contributing to attrition in current times. This paper aims at throwing light in the current scenario of work life balance throughout the leading sectors and the way to improve it.

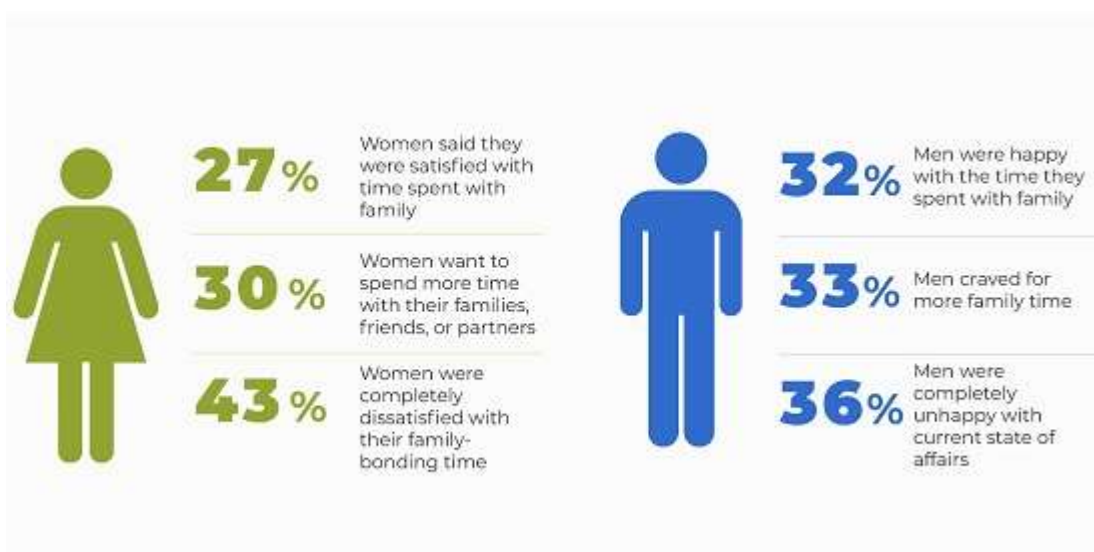
Introduction

In today's fast track life, human resource professionals are putting their best foot forward to create a bottom line of Work life balance in the lives of their employees along with keeping up with Work life trends. The success factors of any job count on the dedication, competence and right move at right time, but strained work also accounts to it. This paper aims to throw light on the current scenario of work satisfaction and work life balance across different sectors like IT, Banking & Finance, Retail, Education, Manufacturing and Pharmaceutical.

Basically, there are three major challenges that magnify the work life imbalance viz a viz Personal lives, Family values & Global competition. This article offers the perspective that human resource professionals can assist their companies to capitalize on these factors by using work-life initiatives to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

The article aims to understand the current situation and suggest ways to enhance the work life balance by opening the platform for perceptions of the respondents. There are certain options provided from our side like Flexible working hours, Hybrid, Off sites/ trips, career sabbaticals etc

According to Duxbury and Higgins, having a job that requires long hours and a lot of stress can affect both a person's capacity to balance work and family life and their likelihood of developing health problems like smoking, drinking, being overweight, and experiencing depression. Comparatively, Women are more stressed because of the dual responsibility of Work and managing Home, childcare duties and family responsibilities. Work life conflict causes a negative impact on family life.



Literature Review

1. **Ritu Kashyap** in 2015, in her paper titled – **Need for Work Life Balance in Small Organisations** wrote, that Small firms generally focus on the profit making and pay less attention on the work satisfaction and motivation of employees. Rarely, work life balance policies are given emphasis which ultimately results in attrition and increase in labour turnover. This acts a great loss for the organizations as there is great loss in manpower perennially as a lot of resources are invested in sourcing, selecting, on boarding and training them, and all of it gets wasted. So there is more need of work life management policy into small current scenario the various organizations
2. **Dr. Indu Gautam & Dr. Sameeksha Jain** in the year 2018, in their paper titled – **A Study of Work life balance: Challenges & Solutions**, wrote the issue of Work life balance is extremely persistent in recent times. There are numerous factors like HR policies, environment, culture, securities, compensation etc. Every individual undergoes severe stress while creating a balance between family and work, which has an impact on performance at work as well as domestically. Proper goals should be set keeping work and family in mind. The findings of the study indicate that various demographic variables like gender, marital status, age, income and education qualification of the employees has a great impact on work life balance.
3. **Andrea Gragnano, Silvia Simbula, and Massimo Miglioretti** in the year 2020, in their paper titled - **Work–Life Balance: Weighing the Importance of Work–Family and Work–Health Balance**, wrote A central topic has been emerged in organisational literature known as health issue. It is no longer pertaining to a certain age or group, it has been extended to all age groups and backgrounds. Health management is extremely important activity. According to this study, there is an awareness among employees about work life balance and its relation to good health. Our results indicate health as a fundamental domain in the work–life balance dynamic that is as important as the family domain, if not more so.. Hence health domain should be considered equally by researchers and practitioners in addition to family domain while investigation work life balance.

4. **Dr.K. Siva Nageswara Rao** in the year 2019, in their paper titled – **A Study on Work life Balance of Employees**, wrote, It is extremely crucial to differentiate between personal and work life. Those individuals who are constantly frustrated with their work suffer from stress and burnout. They do not actually have time to pause and relax in day to day life which ultimately takes a toll on their performance. It is important to take breaks between long working hours. In order to decrease mental stress, a well maintained schedule is important to balance work, family and friends effectively. The person constantly dealing with demanding work loses out on his best performance because the brain gets occupied by additional tasks. One should learn to walk away from work once working hours are done. In today's fast paced world, we are becoming distant from friends and family. The generation also suffers from medical illness and disorders from prolonged stress such as blood pressure, diabetes and heart diseases.

5. **Eureka Kashyap** in the year 2021, in her paper titled – **Importance of Work life Balance**, wrote,

Since last few years, work performance benchmarking and potential expectations from self have been redefined. This has resulted in more competition and focus from employees and stress levels have increased evidently. With women coming in high hierarchy within workplace, diversity and interpersonal workplace conflicts are becoming the reality of modern workplace. Advancement in technology, international competition and increased consumerism has increased pressure on organisations thus increasing stress on individuals. These factors result in an imbalance in work life balance of employees and hence it is an important topic to be looked into for a health environment and healthy workplace.

Research methodology

- The research methodology adopted in this research work is descriptive in nature. Further, the sample collected via convenience sampling technique consists of 50 responses with 100 % response rate. The data was collected through primary method like self-structured questionnaire. Google form was made and was circulated to the target audience to get the authentic responses.
- First-hand information from sample audience working in different sectors like IT, Banking, Pharmaceutical, Education, Retail etc was sourced & approached, in order to have a broader and comparative overview of work life balance across different sectors.
- Telephonic discussions with the respondents also took place to gain an in-depth understanding of the research.
- Secondary data was gathered through research journals, magazines & websites.

Data collected was analysed using MS excel tools & is presented with the help of pie-charts, graphs & tables.

Research Objectives:

1. To examine the current degree of work life balance across different sectors
2. To identify impact of work life balance on well-being of employees
3. To suggest ways to promote work life balance.

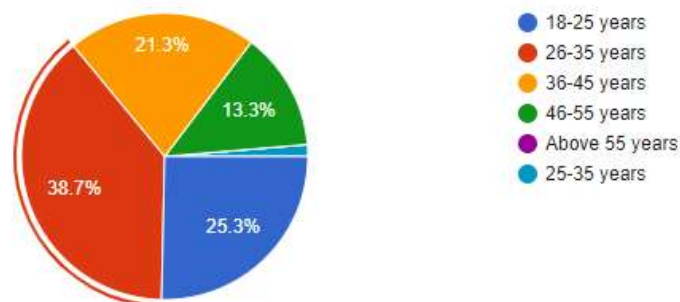
Data Collection:

The data was collected effectively through a structured questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of demographic detail questions starting with, Name, age, gender, and sector under which their organisation falls. The next part of the questionnaire had technical/ relevant questions pertaining to the research topic. Starting with understanding how many days do they work, how long does it take to reach their workplaces. Next set of questions were to understand how often do they work on weekends and overtime, how often do they think or worry about work when not at work, do they feel tired/depressed because of work and if they have developed any stress related diseases. Followed by ways to manage stress and initiatives their organisations should take to manage work life balance of employees. The last set was knowing the status of their satisfaction in regards to work life balance and what their expectations were with respect to work life equilibrium from their organization.

Analysis:

Age

75 responses

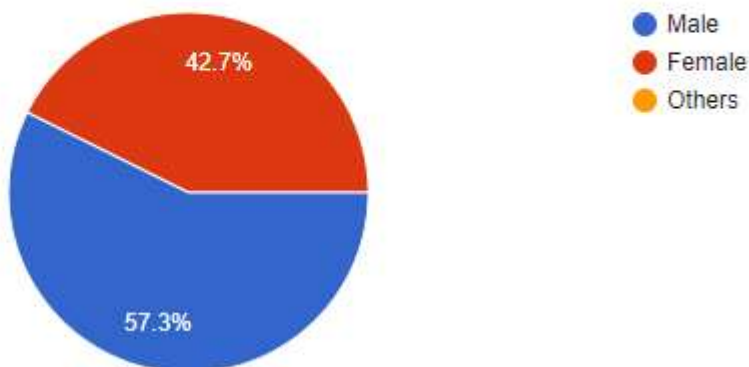


Of all the age brackets mentioned in the questionnaire, major respondents i.e. 38.7% were of the age 26 – 35 years. This sample size was targeted strategically as the idea was to know the work life balance of professionals who are experienced for 5 – 10 years. Next 25.3% belonged to the

age of 18 – 25 years, 21.3% from 36 – 45 years and the rest 13.3% belonged to 46 – 55 years. This demographics are in proportion with the work life balance of the age we want to determine.

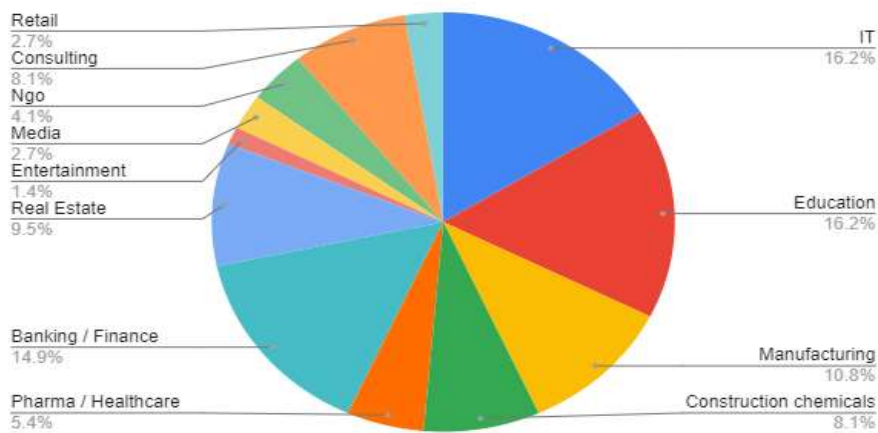
Gender

75 responses



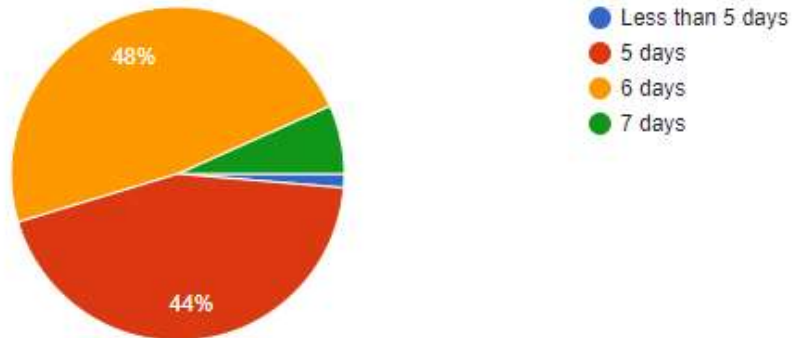
The gender of the sample size is 57.3% is Males and 42.7% of participants are females.

Sectors



How many days in a week do you normally work?

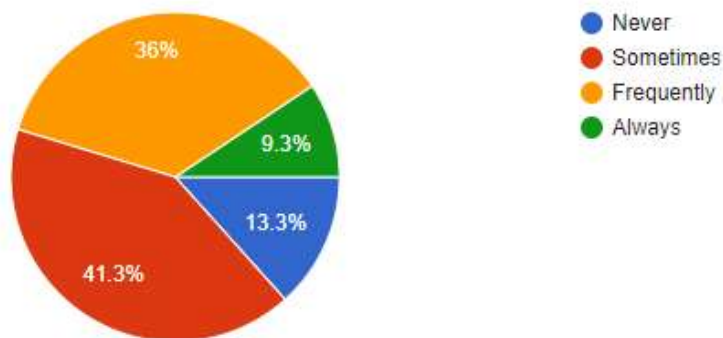
75 responses



Organisations these days have been apparently shifting to 5 days working culture. With the new wage code proposal which is still in talks, it would still take time for 4 days working to be implemented in a country like India. So most of the people i.e. 48% still have 6 days working, next 44% have 5 days working. The rest 6.7% have 7 days working (which is very alarming from work life balance point of view) & just a mere 1.7% have less than 5 days working.

How often do you work **overtime**?

75 responses

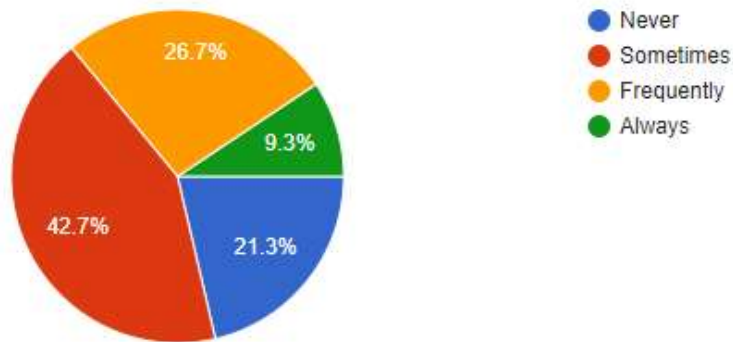


Overtime working is something that is unavoidable in recent times especially with hybrid culture coming in. Majority of the respondents accounting to 41.3% say that they work overtime sometimes, another 36% said that they work on weekends frequently, 13.3% never & 9.3%

always. This is the concern we wish to highlight in this paper, most of the people work overtime this is one factor which causes work life imbalance.

How often do you keep working on **weekends**?

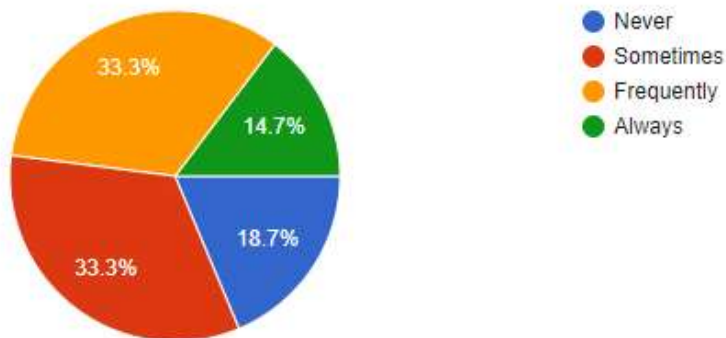
75 responses



Weekends are the time to relax and cope up from the stress caused at work, however many of us tend to work on weekends because it demands so, 42.7% sometimes work on weekends, 26.7% frequently work on weekends and 9.3% of respondents always work on weekends. This is factor no. 2 contributing to imbalance caused in work life balance, this increases stress and affects a person mentally as well as emotionally.

How often do you **think or worry** about work (when you are not actually at work or traveling to work)?

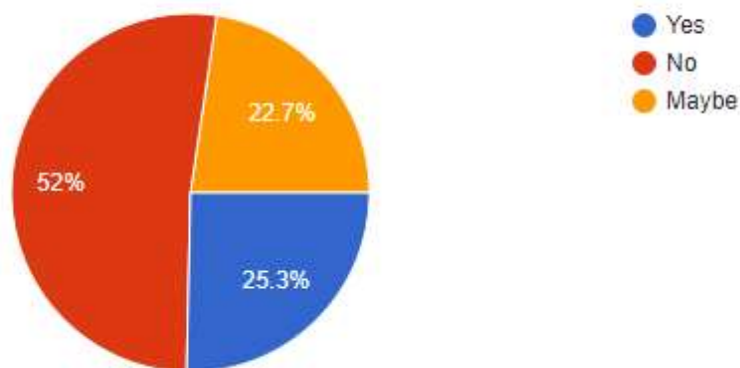
75 responses



This is a micro factor which shows the unconscious stress that has been caused on the mind as when a person is not at work, they tend to think/worry even at that time. 14.7% people always think about work when not at work. This shows that their mind has already been so preoccupied of work that they cant think of something else.

Do you ever feel **tired or depressed** because of work ?

75 responses

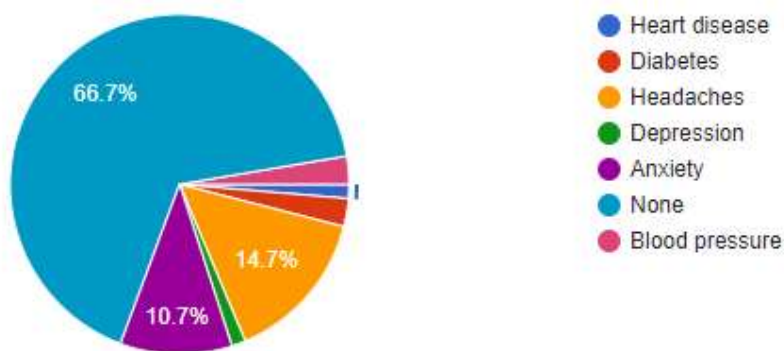


Fatigue, stress, drained out is something that all the generations experience.

Some people are aware whereas some are not. 25.3% respondents feel tired or depressed because of work and this causes several problems on a long run. Another 22.7% were not sure.

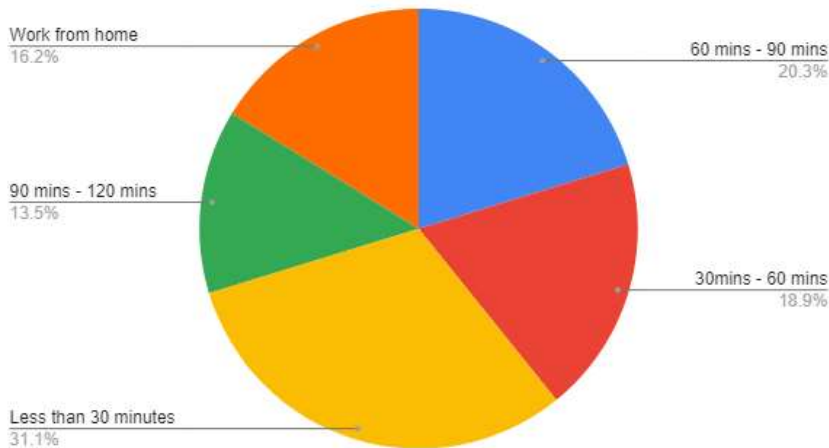
Do you suffer from any **stress-related diseases** ?

75 responses



The next piece of analysis is worry some as the respondents have enlisted the diseases they are going through because of stress arising at work. Almost 1/3 of people suffer from these diseases. Also, Anxiety is a new age issue that is creeping in the generation as every other person tends to have anxiety. 10.7% of respondents suffer from Anxiety due to stress, 2.7% suffer from Diabetes, 14.7% again from headaches and 2.7% from Blood Pressure.

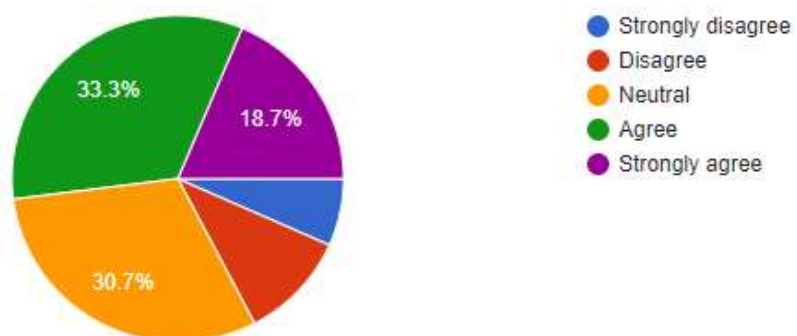
How long does it take to commute to your workplace?



31.1% of the respondents have their work places nearby to their residence and they have opted for less than 30 minutes. The next batch of 20.3% people have responded that it takes almost 1 hour to one and half hour to reach their workplaces which is again very stressful as a person reaching at work gets already tired from the travelling and while leaving from work also has to again go through the same if especially in metro city is. The next 18.9% have opted for one half an hour to 1 hour as they have their workplaces located at a medium distance the next 13.5% of the people have opted for 90 minutes to 120 minutes which is like a lot like almost 4 hours a day they invest in going and coming back from work which is actually very stressful in the next 16.2% have hybrid model all completely remote working from home.

Does the organization take **initiatives to manage work life** of its employees? (Flexible working/ Hybrid / Off sites/ trips etc)

75 responses



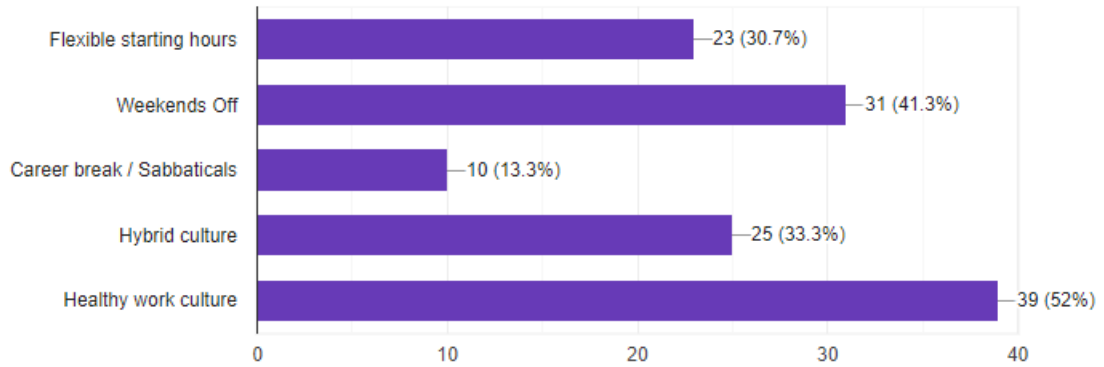
When asked about the initiatives that their organisations took to manage effectively the work life balance only 33% agreed on the fact that yes the organisations did take some efforts, 30.7% were neutral like the organisation may have taken and may not have taken any initiatives.18.7%

Strongly agree that the organisations have taken the efforts to make their of life a little more balanced and 6.7% disagreed that their organisation has not taken any efforts.

Do you personally feel any of the following will help you to **balance your work life?** ,



75 responses

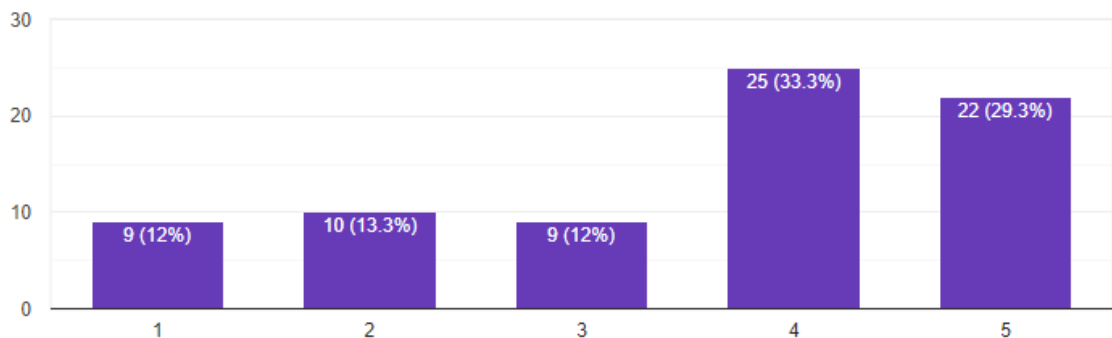


Out of all the options given, most of the respondents felt that Healthy work culture is extremely important to sustain work life balance. The next important factor is Weekends off, as we rightly pointed out sometime back that most of the people actually work 6 or 7 days in the week. The next solution was Hybrid culture and flexible starting hours followed by career breaks / sabbaticals.

How satisfied are you with your current work/life balance ?



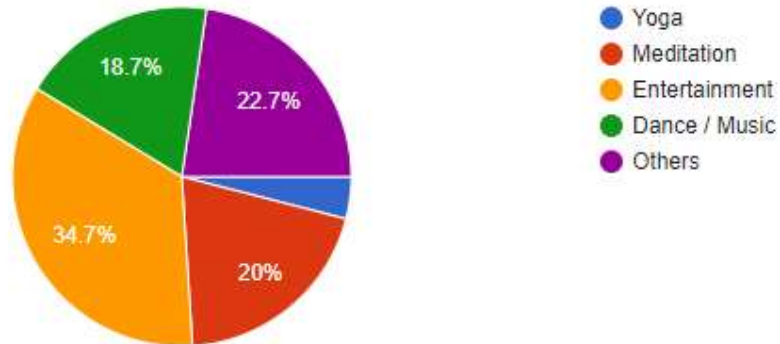
75 responses



This actually reflects the situation of Work life balance. 1/3 of the participants are satisfied with their work life balance as they have chosen 4 on a scale of 1 – 5. Nearly another 37% of the people are highly dissatisfied as they have chosen 1/2/3 out of 5.

How do you **manage stress** arising from your work?

75 responses



Majority of people i.e. 34.7% resort to entertainment to manage stress, another 20% prefer meditating to relieve work stress, 3.9% of people do yoga, 18.7% resort to dance/ music.

Findings:

1. Major respondents were of the age 26 – 35 years.
2. **Most of the people still have 6 days working and some even work for 7 days.**
3. **Working overtime** is a reality as nearly 40% of people work overtime **frequently** and 10% work overtime **always**.
4. **Working on weekends** is another factor that causes imbalance in work life balance as majority of people still work on weekends. (42.7% sometimes work on weekends, 26.7% frequently work on weekends and 9.3% of respondents always work on weekends)
5. 14.7% people **always think about work when not at work**. This is a micro factor which shows the unconscious stress that has been caused on our minds as when a person is not at work, they **tend to think/worry** even at that time.
6. Most common resort from work stress is **Entertainment, followed by Meditation, dance & music.**
7. **1/3 of people suffer from work stress related diseases**, Anxiety is a new age issue as every other person tends to have **anxiety** followed by **Diabetes, Headaches & Blood Pressure** arising due to work stress.
8. On an average, it takes **30-60 mins** to reach respective workplaces.
9. Respondents feel that their Companies have taken **mediocre initiatives** to manage work life of its employees
10. Out of all the options given, most of the respondents felt that **Healthy work culture is extremely important to sustain work life balance**

11. **Nearly 37% of the people are highly dissatisfied with their work life balance** as they have chosen 1/2/3 on the scale of 5.

Recommendations & Solutions:

1. Healthy work culture & environment.
2. Weekends off
3. Employee's mental and physical wellness.
4. HR indexes for sustained improvement plan.
5. Flexible working, Hybrid working.
6. Trust, integrity & respectful treatment
7. Rewards & Recognition
8. Not working beyond working hours.
9. Considerate compensation.
10. Five day working is extremely essential as a person needs adequate time to relax and spend quality time with family and rest.
11. One should leave working as soon as working hours are done.
12. Breaks are necessary during long working hours.
13. Stress related diseases are on a spree and a good work life balance is extremely essential to avoid these.
14. Respective workplaces should be as near as possible so there is less draining of energy while commuting at work.

Conclusion:

Balancing work and life is of utmost importance. A great sense of responsibility comes with each of personal life as well as professional work. But imbalance in anyone could cause potential damage to both losing productivity as well as mental health. Hence having work life balance by implementing various strategies mentioned by Organization as well as employees could lead to high productivity levels and better health both physical and mental. The level of focus and efficiency will be on the rise entirely because of the balance maintained between work and life.

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Annexure:

Questionnaire:

1. Name

2. Age

- 18 - 20 years
- 20 - 25 years
- 25 - 30 years
- 30 - 35 years
- 35 - 40 years
- 40 years and above

1. Gender

2. Name of your organization

3. Sector under which your organization falls

- IT
- Pharma / Healthcare
- Education
- Banking / Finance
- Retail
- Manufacturing

4. How many days in a week do you normally work?

Less than 5 days/5 days/6 days/7 days

5. How long does it take to commute to your workplace?

6. How often do you work **overtime**?

Never/Sometimes/Frequently/Always

7. How often do you keep working on **weekends**?

Never/Sometimes/Frequently/Always

8. How often do you **think or worry** about work (when you are not actually at work or traveling to work)?

Never/Sometimes/Frequently/Always

9. Do you ever feel **tired or depressed** because of work ?

Yes/No/Maybe

10. How do you **manage stress** arising from your work?

Yoga/Meditation/Entertainment/Dance /MusicOthers

11. Do you suffer from any **stress-related diseases** ?

Heart disease/Diabetes/Headaches/Depression/Anxiety/Blood pressure/ None

12. Does the organization take **initiatives to manage work life** of its employees?

Flexible working/ Hybrid / Off sites/ trips etc

13. How satisfied are you with your current work/life balance ?

14. What are your expectations with respect to work life equilibrium from your organization?

Open to suggestions.